

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing a switch user functionality in a server-agent environment in an information technological (IT) network in which at least one agent runs on a node of the IT network, comprising:

generating a switch user (SU) certificate using public-key cryptography upon receiving a request to switch from a user account presently used on the node to another user account;

sending the SU certificate to the agent;

checking the correctness of the SU certificate;

performing the requested switch to the other user account provided that the SU certificate is correct.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the server-agent environment comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is management agent running on a managed node.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate is generated by a designated server.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent forwards the received SU certificate to a domain controller which checks the correctness of the SU certificate and allows the agent to perform the requested switch user.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein a private and public key pair is available before the method begins.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the public key is made public within

1 the network or within a domain of the network in which the correctness of the
2 SU certificate is checked.

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4 7. The method of claim 5, wherein the generation of the SU certificate
5 comprises signing an SU document with the private key and wherein the
6 checking of the SU certificate comprises verifying the signature with the public
7 key.

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9 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of checking the correctness
10 of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU certificate originates from a
11 designated server and has not been modified.

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13 9. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate contains no
14 password relating to the account to which the switch is to be performed.

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16 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises the
17 account name to which the account is to be switched and an identification of
18 the node for which the switch is to be performed.

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20 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the SU certificate comprises a time
21 stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

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23 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of checking comprises
24 verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been used before, by
25 means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

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27 13. A computer program product including program code for providing a
28 switch user functionality in a server-agent environment in an information
29 technological (IT) network in which at least one agent runs on a node of the IT

1 network, said program code for:

2 generating a switch user (SU) certificate using public-key cryptography
3 upon receipt of a request to switch from a user account presently used on the
4 agent to another user account;
5 sending the SU certificate to the agent;
6 checking the correctness of the SU certificate;
7 performing the requested switch to the other user account provided that
8 the SU certificate is correct.

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10 14 The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the server-agent
11 environment comprises a network management server and wherein the agent is
12 management agent running on a managed node.

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14 15. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate
15 is generated by a designated server.

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17 16. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the agent
18 forwards the received SU certificate to a domain controller which checks the
19 correctness of the SU certificate and allows the agent to perform the requested
20 switch user.

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22 17. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein a private and
23 public key pair is generated before an SU certificate is generated for the first
24 time.

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26 18. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the public key is
27 made public within the network or within a domain of the network in which the
28 correctness of the SU certificate is checked.

19. The computer program product of claim 17, wherein the generation of the SU certificate comprises signing an SU document with the private key and wherein the checking of the SU certificate comprises verifying the signature with the public key.

20. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the step of checking the correctness of the SU certificate comprises verifying that the SU certificate originates from a designated server and has not been modified.

21. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate contains no password relating to the account to which the switch is to be performed.

22. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate comprises the account name to which the account is to be switched and an identification of the node for which the switch is to be performed.

23. The computer program product of claim 13, wherein the SU certificate comprises a time stamp or another certificate identification stamp.

24. The computer program product of claim 23, wherein the step of checking comprises verifying that the certificate is not outdated or has not been used before, by means of the time stamp or the certificate identification stamp.

25. A system for managing objects in an information technological (IT) network having a network management server and at least one management agent which runs on a managed node of the IT network, said system provides a switch user functionality and comprises:

an SU certificate generation component which uses public-key

1 cryptography;

2 an SU certificate sending component which sends the certificate to the
3 agent;

4 an SU certificate checking component;

5 a user account switching component performing the requested switch
6 provided that the SU certificate is correct.

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8 26. The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate generation
9 component is a part of the management server.

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11 27. The system of claim 25, wherein the SU certificate checking
12 component is a part of a domain controller.

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14 28. The system of claim 25, further comprising a public key publication
15 component.

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17 29. The system of claim 28, wherein the SU certificate generation
18 component comprises an digital-signature component which signs an SU
19 document with a private key corresponding to the public key and wherein the
20 SU certificate checking component comprises a signature verification
21 component.

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